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Specification and Drawings, as originally filed, with Application for Patent Serial No:
2,421,989, on March 13, 2003, by VINK INC., assignee of Michael A. Vink and
Henrikus Vink, for, "Cigarette Package"

Bracy Loubier

Agent certificateur/Certifying Officer

March 5, 2004

Date

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A roll of tape formed of a flexible material and having a length and a plurality of
5 portions defining a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along the length, wherein each
cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like, and wherein a selected number of each
of the cavities is defined in part by an intercavity portion. The packaging enables the
cigarettes to be dispensed, singularly, and stay fresh and dry longer by being
conveniently individually wrapped and dispensed.

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CIGARETTE PACKAGEFIELD OF THE INVENTION

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This invention relates to packaging of cigarettes, cigarillos, cigars and the like, particularly to said packaging in the form of rolls of dispensing tape.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

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With conventional packing of cigarettes, a predetermined number of cigarettes are wrapped with a sheet of inner packing paper for water- and humidity-proofness and with a sheet of outer paper for correct information on the packed cigarettes and for enhancement of their commercial value. Further, the outer packing paper is, generally, wrapped with a transparent sheet of packing paper.

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When a package of cigarettes packed in the above-described conventional packing manner is opened, an opening is defined through the packaging sheets on the side of the tops of the cigarettes so that the interior of the package is communicated with the surrounding atmosphere. As a result, aroma inherent to the packed cigarettes tends 20 to be lost; cigarettes are scattered to surrounding atmosphere; and the package is deformed.

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United States Patent No. 4,920,728, issued May 1, 1990 to K. Shibuya, describes a method wherein a thin sheet with a suitable degree of flexibility is interposed between tips of cigarettes to be packed in a package and the inner surface of a top of the package so that when the upper portion of the package is opened to define a cigarette picking up opening, the thin sheet remains in said opening in the form of an inner cover or lid.

However, there still remains a need for providing cigarettes, cigarillos and cigars in packaging which maximizes retention of the flavour and enable each cigarette to stay fresh and dry longer.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide improved packaging for cigarettes and the like which enables the cigarettes to stay fresh and dry longer by being conveniently individually wrapped and dispensed.

Accordingly, in one aspect, the invention provides a roll of tape formed of a flexible material and having a length and a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length, wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like, wherein a selected number of each of said cavities is defined in part by an intercavity portion.

Preferably, the roll of tape comprises a pair of complementary longitudinal films formed of a plastics material bonded one to the other as to define a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length of the tape wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like between said films.

The tape preferably has each of said intercavity portions having a plurality of perforations perpendicular to said length of said tape to operably constitute tear-off means to separate one cavity from another.

It also preferably has each cavity defined in part by an edge portion of said tape of sufficient finger gripping area as to operably constitute tear-open means to provide access to said cigarette retained in said cavity.

Further, the tape preferably has each of said intercavity portions further comprising weakened flanking portions parallel to and either side of said cavity to operably comprise said tear-open means.

More, preferably, the tape comprises a film of a plastics material such as, polyethylene, laminated to a complementary full length or discrete individual portions of film of a metallic foil, such as a silver or aluminum foil.

The term "roll" herein includes an open or closed strip or the like.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the invention may be better understood, a preferred embodiment will now be described by way of example only, with reference to the drawing, wherein

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a roll of tape packaging for cigarettes according to the invention, comprising a pair of laminated plastics films;

FIG. 2 is a diagrammatic plan view of a portion of a tape according to the invention;

FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic longitudinal side view of a strip of tape packaging for cigarettes according to the invention comprising a plastics film laminated to a film of 5 metallic foil;

FIG. 4 represents a diagrammatic longitudinal side view of several strips according to the invention arranged to be packaged into a sleeve; and wherein the same numerals denote like parts.

10 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference to FIGS. 1 and 2, these show generally as 10 a roll of tape formed of a complementary pair of films 12, 14 formed of a thermoplastic material, polyethylene in this embodiment, bonded by lamination one to the other at each side 15 and edge portions 16, 18, respectively, to define a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities 20 along the length of the tape 22. Each cavity 20 holds an individual cigarette 24. Between each cavity 20, an intercavity portion 26 has a plurality of perforations or serrations 28 perpendicular to the length 22 of the tape, by which each segment of tape holding cigarette 24 may be separated from its adjacent neighbour.

20 One side of tape 10 is provided with a plurality of tinfoil tabs 30, one per cavity, of sufficient finger gripping area as to enable tabs 30 to be pulled upwardly to operably constitute tear-open means to give access to a cigarette retained in the cavity.

Also, along the flanking portions 16 of each cavity, the bonding of the plastic films 12, 14 is weakened to enable ease of separation by the action of pull-tabs 30.

25 The tape 10 may be made by lamination of suitably shaped films 12, 14 by methods known in the art.

In an alternative embodiment of the roll, shown in Fig. 3 generally as 100, a single film of a plastics material 102 is laminated to an intermittent plurality of tin foil strip portions 104 to define a plurality of cavities 106, each of which holds a cigarette or 30 the like as analogously hereinabove described. The roll similarly has the desired perforations and tabs to enable pull-off removal of the tin foil to release a cigarette.

FIG. 4 shows a plurality of tape strips, generally as 202, 204, 206 according to the invention alternatively packaged in a flat, folded, even manner rather than in a roll

and provides improved minimal thickness and, preferably, enables e.g. 20-25 cigarettes-containing strips to be fitted into a cardboard sleeve; shown in dashed outline 108.

Although this disclosure has described and illustrated certain preferred embodiments of the invention, it is to be understood that the invention is not restricted to those particular embodiments. Rather, the invention includes all embodiments which are functional or mechanical equivalence of the specific embodiments and features that have been described and illustrated.

Claims:

1. A roll of tape formed of a flexible material and having a length and a plurality of portions defining a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length, wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like, and wherein a selected number of each of said cavities is defined in part by an intercavity portion.
5. A roll of tape as defined in claim 1 comprising a pair of complementary longitudinal films formed of a plastics material bonded one to the other as to define a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length of the tape wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like between said films.
10. A roll of tape as defined in claim 1 comprising a longitudinal first film formed of a plastics material bonded to a complementary longitudinal second film formed of a metallic foil, one to the other as to define a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length of the tape wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like between said films.
15. A roll of tape as defined in claim 1 comprising a longitudinal first film formed of a plastics material bonded to a complementary longitudinal second film formed of a metallic foil, one to the other as to define a plurality of sealed, air-tight cavities along said length of the tape wherein each cavity is adapted to retain a cigarette or the like between said films.
20. A roll of tape as defined in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein each of said intercavity portions has a plurality of perforations perpendicular to said length of said tape to operably constitute tear-off means to separate one cavity from another.
25. A roll of tape as defined in any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein each cavity is defined in part by an edge portion of said tape of sufficient finger gripping area as to operably constitute tear-open means to provide access to said cigarette retained in said cavity.
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6. A roll of tape as defined in claim 5 wherein each of said intercavity portions further comprises weakened flanking portions parallel to and either side of said cavity to operably comprise said tear-open means.

- 5 7. A roll of tape as defined in claim 4 wherein said finger-gripping area is formed of a material comprising a metallic foil.

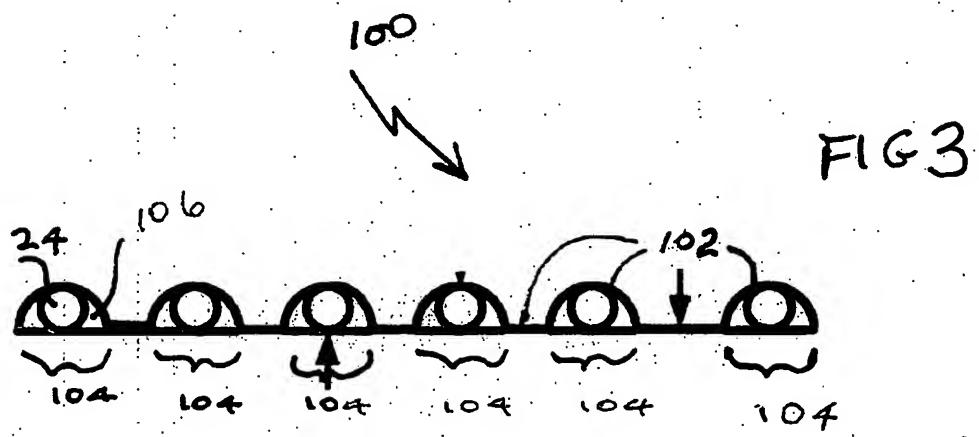
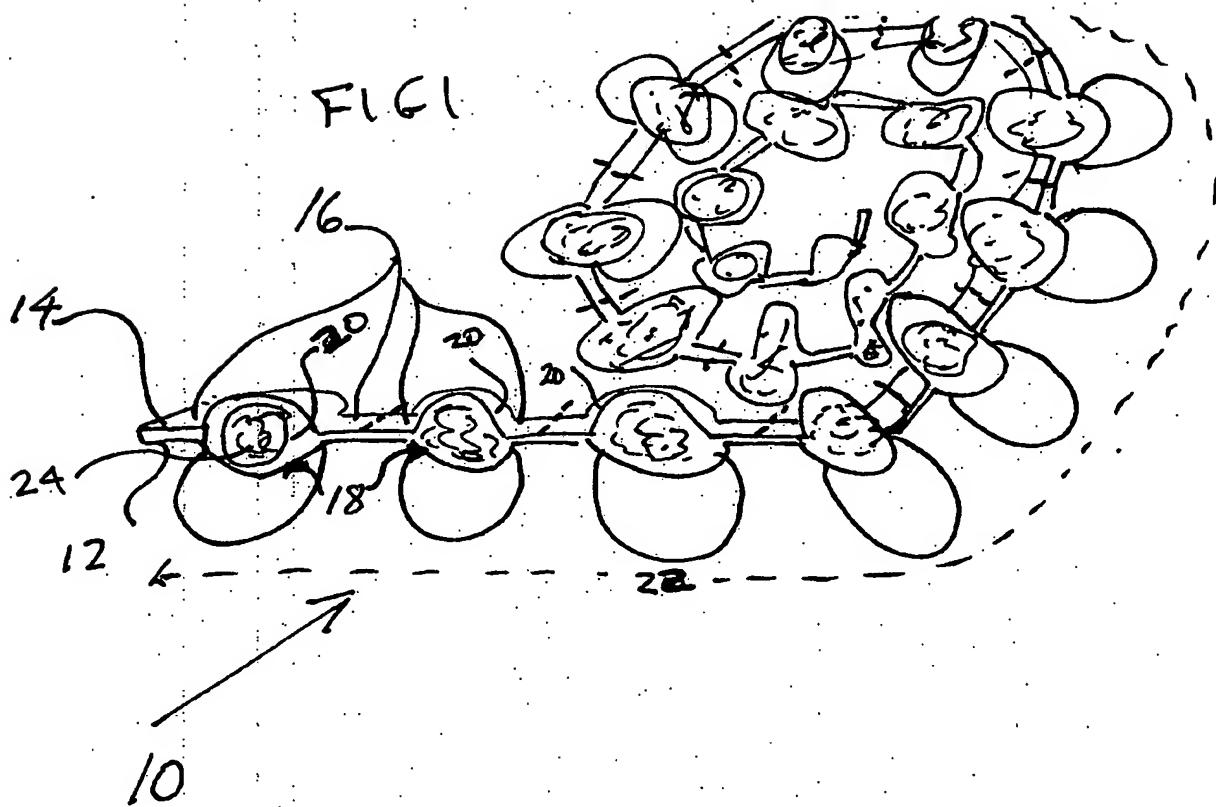


FIG 2

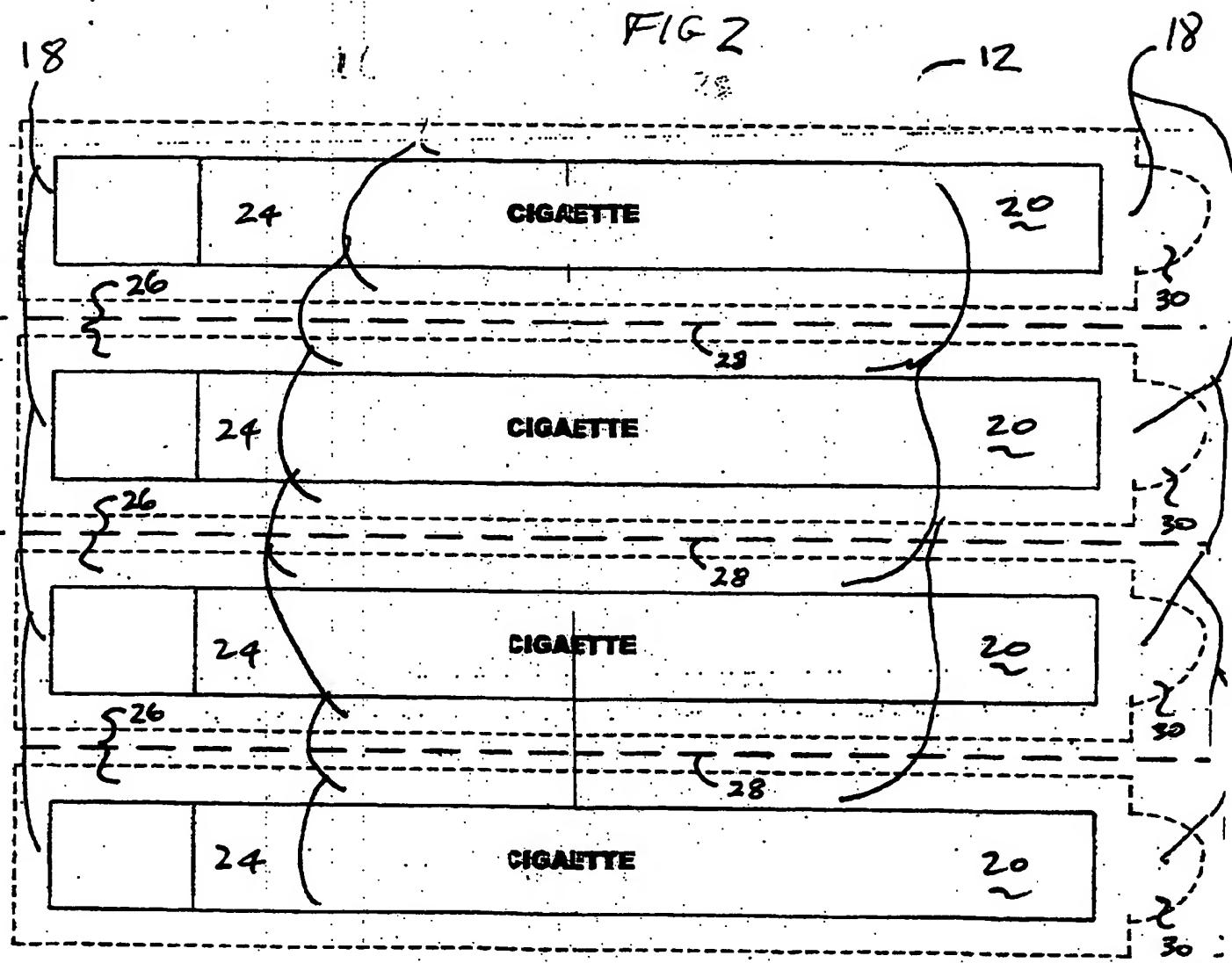


FIG 4

